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Bard

= = = = =

I want to give you
What I don't have

This is love
It is terrible.

10 March 2008

= = = = =

Overanxious
as a dragging anchor
too light for
even the dory goes
in such current
awry: a traveling
mistake, a soft bone.

10 III 08

CALAMUS

But I have no friend,
arctic waste, blue ice
of Labrador I saw.

Calamus and a song
a drug a medicine a plant
a smoking pipe a friend

I have no friend
don't smoke the ice
is green along the shore

of Labrador
and I want more
not just the jungle

thinking of us, ice also
has us on its mind—
forgiveness!

His wounds bleed
along the firmament
an ooze of light!

Calamus, I was here
when it began.
Saltire cross, white

on blue ice, Saint
Andrew's. All
the crucifixions—

no more martyrdoms.
no more martyrs. Jihad
only on the inside

self against the clamor

of the self, heart
against the greedy heart.

10 March 2008

= = = = =

Who is this will whose spear you shake
all over the mild music? Will he wait
or is he gate, *gâtê*, gone over to our enemy
the Mind, the common source and destination,
the one unalterable good that makes each ego squirm
hamletty and othelloid, we all are *barbaroi*
and he's the worst, the best, the most but we
need him to spill our seed in the silliest ears?

11 March 2008

= = = = =

Morning with Brahms.

1.

How once
they must have heard him
implacably sweet, cold sweet,
undisguised yearning for a fleshly secret,
this pre-Rilke of him, his, his orient, supersaturate,
attar of the rose.

Self
absorbed it must have felt, utter
absent from the public thing,
the sweet
in your own mouth
and no lips near you
to kiss so they could know,

you had to hum the taste
that thrills you,
the taste you mean,

sugar in a mute woman's mouth
he wants to speak

2.

Rezeptionsgeschichte:

then later later
what comes floating
over the Baltic
the Bodensee the Alps
the Italy you never
hear him yearning for
anywhere,

a serious
understanding comes
how big this music is.

Vast implosions of the personal
loud loud but not for you,

in a public tribe
how almost wicked
his insistent inward is,

no Europe no America
not even any war.

3.

EXIT IN CASE OF BRAHMS

the sign said in Carnegie
Hall in the old cartoon
but why, it came to me,
we struggle for this music
with our lives, we put
the heart at risk
in all this fervent cold
the world lost into
this, this is too much me,

11 March 2008
(to the viola sonata, at Olin)

= = = = =

In Bach's day and long after
the priest stood at the altar
with his back to the people

leading us, our spearhead
to a place or Person he saw
by theory better than we

and led us there, so Bach
always turned towards and through
the music brings us towards.

But nowadays the priests
turn towards us as if they
had something to tell us

we could never know ourselves,
show us roadmaps not mesas,
not jungles, not vineyards

where we could be at home.
And all our music is palaver,
frantic homeless posturing.

11 March 2008

= = = = =

sozein ta phainomena

Green trees out one window
branches bare the other
we have come to a house
where time is broken

the pieces are called music
we scoop them with our ears
— what else is hearing for?—
to save them, to make sense

of the phenomena, save
whatever appears
and work it into the system
of being we call To Be.

*Her whole young bone
America hollow viola stone.*

11 March 2008, Olin

= = = = =

A place where one doesn't stand out
becomes an Assyrian market.
Bulls are killed on every side
and sheep somehow contrive to stay alive.
A while. Tubas and bassoons
caress the breeze, the trees
were cut down long years since
to feed the temple fires. Chinese
restaurant. Shoppers from the mall
interrogate those huge sea-spiders
they call King Crab. My brain seethes
with a million memories not mine.
This place is that place. Now is then.

The languages, so many
I hear them in the market,
people from everywhere
even the mountains
and all of them tell
the same thing to me,
I do not understand
a single human word,
don't know how people
want or mean or do
and are not me.

11 March 2008
Kingston

= = = = =

How deep these roses' red
not just any
but the particular
sanctifying grace
on this table, pale
late winter light,
not sunshine but from
which the sun has
just stepped away
the way we do,

time is a closet,
isn't it,
we go in and out
we store our last season's memories
our squat unfashionable shoes.

Then day comes and we have
no other gear to go out walking
and we do,
we carry the color
of some new-seen thing
as if it were our Lady's love-knot,
but we have no lady and she gives no token
or we are a lady or want one or want for one
and no one knows
where anything is stored
let alone the living.
The living are as fugitive as light.
These roses and no others.
No matter. What is to come.

12 March 2008

"It must be someone's name"

I can't pronounce it
because it has all the letters in it,
all of them, from every alphabet,
strewn across the page like stars—

or a child's idea of stars when one
time I got a-hold of glow-in-the-dark
star shapes and pasted them all
over the room in World War II
weird greeny moons and stars
all over the ceiling, the kind of light
you could only see in the dark,
stars like no skies nearby, stars
seen from some other planet,

childscape with fake stars,
letters all over the paper
waiting for me to say her name
and she will come towards me
sailing out of the simple-minded light.

12 March 2008
(Olin, prompt)

= = = = =

Twelve inches from midnight
the other way
 when a star breaks
 what oozes out
 seeks us
 eager for our meaning,
that we can
mean,
 can intend
 in a world that just tends,
 elapses, lapses
 into music so rarely
 whence.

The chaconne.

 Mind upright against the losses
 these numbers firm,

the clarity of what does not change
because the mind minds them

safe, seven in sevenness, form in form.

12 March 2008

= = = = =

it's like a flute
or maybe not
a continuous thing
you can hear

high, like heat
or her saying
something again
you wonder why

you never care
or why she does
or does she, a flute
or maybe not.

13 March 2008

= = = = =

Dark this
center rose is
draws in

swallows me
where every other
flower leaps
to be here this

one goes back in
is a cave mouth
deeper than ear's eye

to another place
we fall outward
into the deep of us.

14 March 2008

= = = = =

This last thing I thought I understood
an apple rolling cross the table
a monk with a prayerwheel
on fire in Lhasa while the Yellow
Plutocracy roared under the Potala
in tanks and gasmasks designed
in the Pink Plutocracy far away
from such embarrassments
when people dare to quarrel with money
as if there were anything more
important in the world. We all
know better. Fools. Pray
to the apple, pray to the table,
music is a cave you dig for yourself
each time, nothing lasts, it casts
you out, can't stay, pray
to silence that it will let you in,
that the monk die quick without
much pain or that the pain
lasts no longer than some rose does
or an apple rolling off the table.

14 March 2008

= = = = =

Night resting for the moment's motion
as if a cauldron bubbled over quietly
or it did sing but we were deaf to it

so it gushed all over the fire and the pine
logs the fire stood up from and devoured
yet still the flames kept burning

we lick mortally the ooze of such wounds
as if the whole moon's a scab

or scar at least and all ours for the trying
and we try. The motor that made Homer run
is running in the adytum, geared silence,

a catapult of tendons or on the gut strings
the lute-fingers stride making at last
some dumb forgetful river rush through us.

14 March 2008

= = = = =

Then there'll be a flesh for it.
Animal. You turned from me
and I wont forget. Spoke the name
a different way so I can't find you
I can't forgive. I want to misspell you
terribly. You knew and looked away
leaving me animal. And then
in God's truth we were the both are.
And the liberty of things
swam through your thighs in and out.
I looked at you and heard a thing
I'd never heard before or only once
and you were gone. An animal's
business is to forget. Antelope scat
on upland meadow white tailed
dangerous over the last fence gone.

14 March 2008

= = = = =

Arabic number system,
zero, decimal
and the alphabet.
That's all we've got.

15 March 2008

A ROAD MADE UP OF NINES

Nine tells the difference between any two digits taken in one direction from the same digits in the opposite direction, between 12 and 21, 23 and 32...and so on.

So nine is the *god in the shadow*. the number of potency: what the self could/must be if/when it turns inside out.

So we learn: not to elide or abolish the self, but turn it inside out.

What is the self's reciprocal?

Opus Novem. The Nine Work. Which sounds enough like The New Work to fool those with no Latin. And remind us that the word for 9 and the word for new are deeply cognate, as if we first counted on the base 8, and nine started the cycle anew,

a sense we can still taste from Ptolemy's *octotopos*, the eight-house'd chart of ancient astrology – eight summing the complete person, now leap to nine, the new person, the beyond, the transcending one.

So nine is the shadow we must become, the light the future shines on the present, what the present must become.

15 March 2008

= = = = =

All my implications drift east south east across the Vineyard Sound. With luck they'll float out between Gayhead and Nomansland, and keep going, into the open sea, neuter in Latin, *mare*, the taste of your lips.

15 March 2008

= = = = =

Who am I? I meant to say, but it came out of my mouth as *Wer bin ich dann?*
The very form of that question seems to be part of the answer. But which part?

The question arose when I thought about bringing some Beethoven CDs to the car, to listen while I drove to Tivoli to buy their good bread. I meant to ask myself: well, which pieces by Beethoven should it be? But that was overwhelmed by a chill of doubt: I am not the kind of person who listens to music as I drive. I drive in silence, leashing the mind to what is seen.

Which led to: why don't I listen to music in the car like everybody else, who am I to be different, who am I?

And that is the question I tried to speak. But it came out as if I were asking Beethoven. Or thought I was Beethoven. Or as if I had finally given myself away, a secret agent of the Kaiser unmasked at last.

15 March 2008